*Check List* **5**(3): 629–631, 2009.
ISSN: 1809-127X

## NOTES ON GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

# New distributional bird records from south-western province of Esmeraldas, Ecuador

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In 2004 and 2005, the Cabo San Francisco Foundation carried out the "Rain Forest" project, with the principal objective of promoting agroforestry among local farmers to improve the conservation of natural resources. As part of this project, bird surveys were carried out at three sites in Punta Galeras, south-western province of Esmeraldas province, Ecuador, which had been infrequently studied previously. EcoCiencia carried out a rapid assessment in 2001 (Benítez 2001) and other ornithologists have visited the area only occasionally.

The area is part of the Tonchigüe-Mompiche Important Birds Area (Freile and Santander 2005).

During December 2004 and September 2005, San Francisco del Cabo, Quingue and Chipa were visited, with some additional expeditions through mangroves of Muisne, for a total of 83 days. Range extensions were recorded here for two species, and new sites for two additional species are reported in the south of Esmeraldas. The taxonomy and distribution indicated here is based on Ridgely and Greenfield (2001).

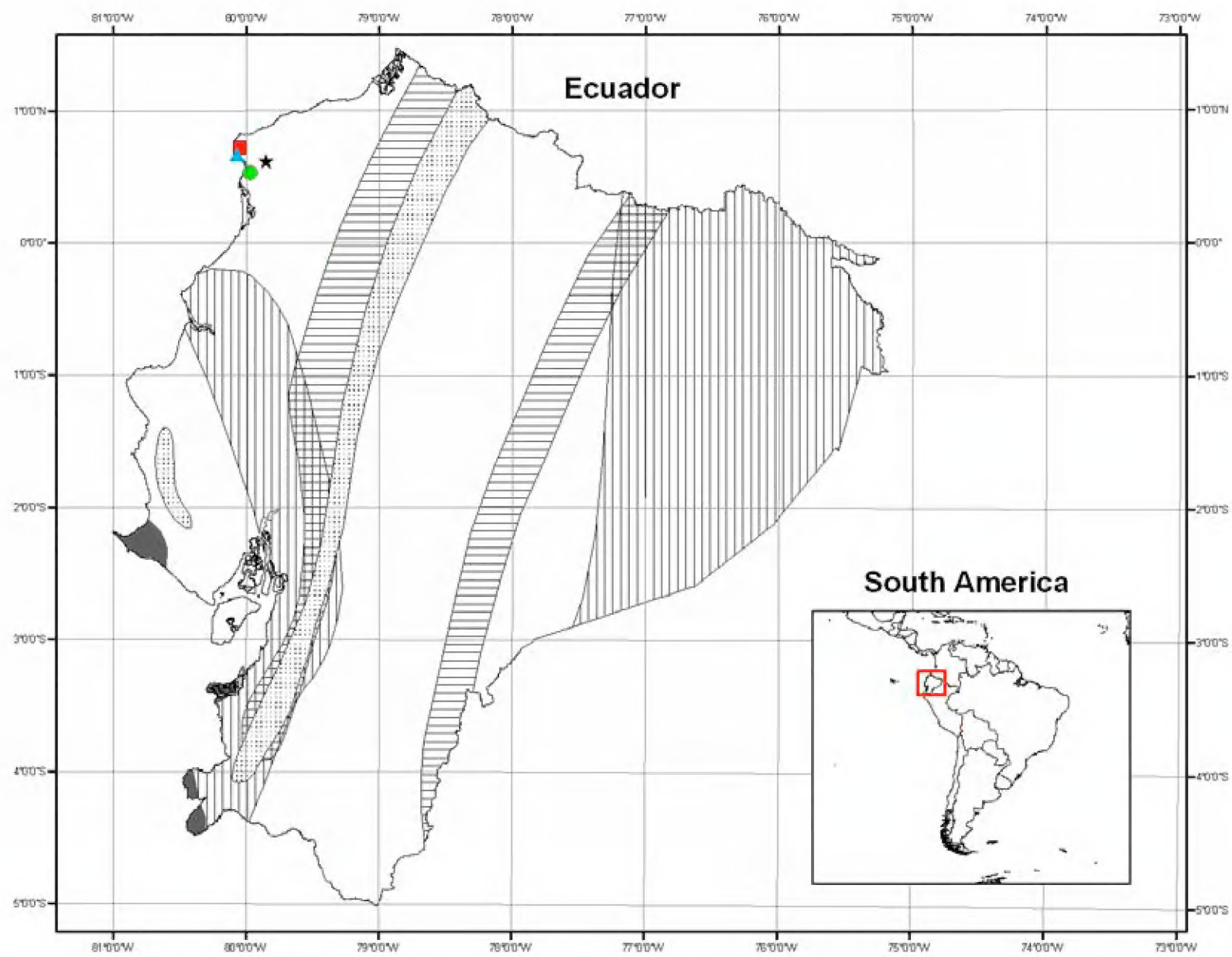


**Figure 1.** Known distributions and new records of four bird species in Ecuador. Known ranges according to Ridgely et al. (2003): vertical hatched area, *Ardea cocoi;* dotted area, *Tangara icterocephala;* horizontal hatched area, *Thamnistes anabatinus*; solid grey area, *Sicalis taczanowskii*. New records: green circle, *Ardea cocoi*; red square, *Tangara icterocephala* and *Thamnistes anabatinus*; blue triangle, *Sicalis taczanowskii.* The black star marks Parker (1992) records at the Bilsa Biological Station.

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Cocoi Heron *Ardea cocoi* Linnaeus, 1776 – In August 2005, two individuals of Cocoi Heron were seen in mangroves of Muisne, south-western Esmeraldas (00°32'14" N, 79°58'54" W, at sea level) near the village of San Gregorio (Figure 1). These birds were seen foraging in the canals that cross the mangroves. This is an extension of roughly 140 km north of the previously known northernmost limit at Bahía de Caráquez

Russet Antshrike *Thamnistes anabatinus* Sclater & Salvin, 1860 – Its distribution is restricted to the foothills and low subtropical forests on both sides of the Andes. Also, there are isolated reports along the coastal mountains (Parker 1992). On 21 August 2005, a bird was caught in the mist net, inside evergreen lowland mature forest around the antenna at Quingue (00°43'10" N, 80°03'59" W, 300 m) (Figure 1). This is a new locality for this species, expanding its distribution in province of Esmeraldas.

Silver-Throated Tanager *Tangara icterocephala* (Bonaparte, 1851) – This tanager occurs mainly in the foothills and Andean subtropics, with one isolated record in the Bilsa Biological Station. On 22 August 2005, an individual (Figure 2) was captured next to antenna in Quingue (00°43'10" N, 80°03'59" W, 300 m a.s.l.) within a well-preserved evergreen lowland forest. This is the second site reported for the lowlands of northwestern Ecuador (Figure 1).

Sulphur-Throated Finch *Sicalis taczanowskii* Sharpe, 1888 – It has previously been recorded only in Loja, El Oro and Guayas provinces up to the Santa Elena peninsula. On 21 December 2004, a flock of approximately 20 individuals (Figure 3) was observed in the Tongora streamside 3 km from Cabo San Francisco (00°40'09" N, 80°04'11" W, 83 m). This group was smaller than usual for the species and was on the bank of the stream, in shrubs next to pastures. This is an extension of more than 300 km north from the previously northernmost limit in the Santa Elena Peninsula (Figure 1).

**Figure 2.** *Tangara icterocephala,* Silver-throated Tanager, inside the forest near the antenna in Quingue, Southwestern Esmeraldas, 22 August 2005.

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**Figure 3.** *Sicalis taczanowskii,* Sulphur-throated Finch, Tongora streamside, Cabo San Francisco, 21 December 2004.

**Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank the Cabo San Francisco Foundation for sponsoring this work, to William Chamorro, María Fernanda Armas and Lily Schneider for assistance in the fieldwork, and George Fletcher, Mariano Zambrano, Enrique Cobeña, and all the local people for helping me with the logistics. Finally I am grateful to Juan Freile Ortíz and Dr. Tjitte de Vries for reviewing this paper, and to Chris Canaday for correcting the English translation and making other suggestions.

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Received March 2009
Accepted August 2009
Published online September 2009